Council Highlights: June, 2000

Published by the Secretariat, Council of Ontario Universities June 2000 Issue

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS is intended to provide quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). It is produced regularly throughout the academic year. This issue covers the month of May 2000.

Ontario university community mourns the passing of David Smith

The Ontario university community was saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. David C. Smith after a brief illness.

Dr. Smith served as Queen's Principal and Vice-Chancellor from 1984 to 1994. From 1992 to 1994, he was Chair of the Council of Ontario Universities. In 1996, he was elected Chair to the government-appointed Advisory Panel on Future Directions for Postsecondary Education. He was then appointed interim President and Vice-Chancellor of Trent University from July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998. In recent years, he has continued to work on behalf of higher education as an advisor to both federal and provincial governments and to COU. Just weeks ago, two major reports prepared by Dr. Smith for COU were released. One addressed issues related to demand and supply conditions for university faculty in Ontario; the other examined methods for improving quality in universities.

"This is a great loss to Queen's and to all those who understand the immense contribution David Smith has made to education in Ontario and beyond," says Dr. William Leggett, Principal of Queen's University. "We will never forget how wisely and creativity he met the considerable challenges he faced as Queen's principal during a time of both social change and financial constraint. We will also forever value the many superb programs now in place as a result of his commitment to excellence and equity."

Born in India, Dr. Smith earned degrees from McMaster, Oxford and Harvard and was awarded honorary degrees from Queen's University at Kingston, Queen's University of Belfast and McMaster University. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a Member of the Order of Canada.

COU has created the David C. Smith Award to memorialize Dr. Smith and his own distinguished contributions to scholarship and policy on higher education in Canada.

New Working Group created to examine performance-based funding

In response to government interest in developing a workable approach to the recently introduced performance-based funding envelope, a new Working Group on Performance-Based Funding, to be co-chaired by Jamie Mackay, Director of the Universities Branch, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), and Ken Snowdon, Vice-President of Policy and Analysis, COU, has been created.

The Working Group will:

- determine the government's objectives in adopting performance-based funding;
- define principles for consideration in developing an approach to performance-based funding;

- review existing performance-based approaches in other jurisdictions to decide best practices;
- determine what, if any, indicators (requiring identification, definition and methodologies for calculation) could be used as the basis for a performance-based funding envelope;
- and develop an understanding of how a performance-based envelope would practically work year to year to ensure that all stakeholders understand the full implications.

Membership will be drawn from MTCU and from seven Ontario universities: David Holmes, Director of Institutional Research, Carleton University; Kerrie-Lee Clark, Director of Institutional Analysis and Government Relations, Lakehead University; Paul Stenton, Director of University Planning, Ryerson Polytechnic University; Bob Truman, Director of Institutional Analysis and Planning, Waterloo; Ruban Chelladurai, Director of Institutional Planning and Budgetting; Marty England, Director of Planning, University of Toronto; and Ted Spence, Senior Policy Advisor, YorkUniversity.

The Working Group may also draw on the expert advice of representatives from other associations, universities, colleges, government and the private sector. Research support will be provided by MTCU and COU as required.

The Working Group will summarize its findings and provide recommendations in a written report to the Minister for consideration for 2001-2002.

COU meets with ministries to discuss guidelines for new curriculum

At the request of Sue Herbert, Deputy Minister of Education, and Robert Christie, Deputy Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), representatives of COU met in early spring to discuss the guidelines that COU published to help secondary school students plan their choice of courses under the new curriculum.

COU was represented by President Ian Clark; Ken Snowdon, Vice-President of Policy and Analysis; Dr. Claude Lajeunesse, Chair of COU's Task Force on Secondary School Issues and President of Ryerson Polytechnic University; Diane Crocker, OUCA's representative on the Task Force and Senior Associate Director of Admissions Policy and National Recruitment at York University; and Dr. Guy Hamel, Schools Liaison Officer. Government representatives in attendance were David Trick, Assistant Deputy Minister, MTCU; and from the Ministry of Education, Dr. Sylvia Solomon and Maurice Glaude, both Education Officers with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Branch.

The main issue of discussion concerned university admission policy in relation to the new curriculum. Since the material describing the new Grade 11 and Grade 12 courses has not yet been released, Ontario universities are not able to establish institutional and program admission requirements. The process of having new regulations drafted and reviewed by academic bodies and adopted by Senate will take time, and universities may not be able to provide specific direction to secondary school students about their choice of courses as soon as would be desirable. Some of the concerns expressed by parents and students were outlined in the meeting, as well as the frustration felt by admissions staff at their inability to provide reliable information.

Both Deputy Ministers expressed their recognition of the problems related to introducing new courses. The meeting illustrated the need for the groups represented – both ministries, COU and the Ontario Universities' Council on Admissions (OUCA) – to keep one another informed of issues of mutual concern arising from introducing the last phase of secondary school reform. Developing a communications strategy was deemed critical to ensuring that students, especially those planning their postgraduation careers during this period, receive timely and accurate

information about the new curriculum.

A decision was made to form a liaison committee to identify issues of shared concern and to co-ordinate means of addressing these issues. Dr. Solomon will undertake organizing ministerial representation. Serving on the committee from COU will be Ms. Crocker, Dr. Hamel and Mr. Snowdon, as well as Dr. John Metcalfe, Registrar, Wilfrid Laurier University; Karel Swift, University Registrar and Director of Admissions, University of Toronto; and Charlene Yates, Assistant Registrar, University of Windsor. The committee was also asked to consider means of involving university faculty members in implementing and evaluating new courses. The measures used in the validation of the curriculum were presented as a model for such a program.

Task Force meets with representatives of EQAO

On May 16, 2000, the COU Task Force on Secondary School Issues met with Joan Green, Chief Executive Officer of Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), and members of her staff to discuss questions of mutual interest related to the evaluation of students in the new secondary school program of studies.

Dr. Claude Lajeunesse, Chair of the Task Force and President of Ryerson Polytechnic University, spoke of the general unease about ensuring that the new grading scheme would deal with the problems associated with the evaluation of students and the reporting of grades under OSIS. Since the role of EQAO in testing Grade 12 students has not yet been determined, Ms. Green could not deal specifically with the approach her organization might take or be asked to take. However, all those present at the meeting agreed on the value of an in-service program that would monitor grading practices and allow teachers to benefit from the review of standards and measures of evaluation.

The Task Force, with advice from EQAO staff, plans to make a recommendation to COU to support a mechanism for monitoring grading practices and standards within the new curriculum.

COU participates in Ministry consultations to increase degree opportunities

On May 29, 2000, COU participated in one of a series of consultations held by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) in response to MTCU's consultation paper, *Increasing Degree Opportunities for Ontarians*. Ken Snowdon, Vice-President of Policy and Analysis, represented COU at the consultation, which was also attended by Dr. David Leyton-Brown, Executive Director of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies.

As a follow-up, COU prepared a brief that addresses specific questions posed by the MTCU consultation paper concerning four areas: Quality Assessment Board; applied degree pilot project; new Ontario-based private institutions; and new taxpayer and student project measures. COU stressed four key points in response:

- *The quality reviews should be rigorous.*

Quality reviews for degree programs offered by private institutions should be rigorous and maintain the current quality standards for Ontario.

- *No public subsidies should be provided to private institutions.*

The Minister has indicated that private institutions offering degrees will not be eligible for capital or operating funding. COU will underscore the importance of ensuring that public funds not be diverted away from the publicly funded system to support private institutions.

- *The application for degree-granting status and the conduct of the reviews should be*

procedurally transparent.

All applications to the Quality Assessment Board should be made public and considered at a public hearing prior to approval. Results of the reviews and rationale for decisions should also be made public.

- *The standards for college applied degrees should be quite different from those for university degrees.*

Most notably, no research role should be required of faculty who teach applied degrees offered by Ontario's colleges.

COU submitted its brief to the Minister on June 2, 2000. All universities were invited to participate in consultation sessions held in their regions between May 15 and June 1.

Minister announces continued support for OPAS

On April 27, 2000, the Board of Directors of OPAS welcomed Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, to its meeting. The Minister expressed her appreciation and high regard for the work of OPAS, and announced her continued support of the office over the next four years. Another guest of the board, David Johnston, Chair of the Task Force on Learning Technologies and President of the University of Waterloo, presented the Task Force's report, *A Time to Sow*. The board also heard from COU President Ian Clark, who discussed the emerging factors that challenge Ontario universities today. Industry members expressed interest in acquiring more information about these issues; a follow-up discussion is planned.

Program of undergraduate program reviews ongoing

To maintain and enhance the quality of undergraduate education, Ontario universities implement a regular process of undergraduate program review (UPR) within each institution according to the guidelines issued by the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC), under the authority of the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). In turn, auditors appointed by OCAV conduct a thorough audit of the UPR process.

This audit procedure was designed to satisfy the need for public accountability identified in the Broadhurst report of 1993. The auditors assess whether the university's policies and procedures governing the undergraduate program review process are consistent with the UPRAC guidelines, and whether each individual undergraduate program review was conducted according to the university's policies. All reviews must include a thorough self-evaluation by the faculty on their program's strengths and weaknesses, and an assessment by at least one external consultant.

An audit entails a detailed assessment of the documentation provided by the university and is followed by an on-site visit. During the visit, the auditors meet with the academic vice-president, deans and representatives from the programs whose reviews were selected for audit, as well as with members of the Senate committee responsible for curricular and academic standards.

Since the audit program began in 1997, Brock University, University of Ottawa, University of Windsor, University of Western Ontario, Queen's University, Nipissing University and Carleton University have been audited. Currently, an audit of York University is underway, and Lakehead University is scheduled for audit in the fall. Ultimately, the undergraduate programs of all Ontario universities will be audited over the course of a seven-year period.

Symposium on cultural sector attracts industry and universities

On May 18, 2000, the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS), in partnership with the

Cultural Human Resources Council and the Cultural Careers Council Ontario, hosted a Cultural Sector Symposium. The one-day session was co-chaired by Dr. Lorna Marsden, President of York University, and Peter Herrndorf, Director General and CEO of Ottawa's National Arts Centre.

More than 40 representatives of cultural organizations and Ontario universities participated in the symposium. Discussions included curriculum development needs, making the transition from university to Ontario's cultural labour force, and professional development, with a particular focus on how to develop a timely and cost-effective response to the needs of the self-employed. The ideas generated at the event will be used to enhance working relationships among cultural institutions and Ontario universities. This is the third sectoral symposium co-ordinated by OPAS in response to a request from the COU Task Force on Labour Market Issues.

Application Centre on the move

COU's Executive Committee, at its May 12th meeting, approved a recommendation from the OUAC Advisory Board that the Ontario Universities' Application Centre relocate to an expanded facility in April 2001. The services offered by the Centre continue to grow, and the space at its current location, 650 Woodlawn Road in Guelph, is too small to ensure the continued efficient processing of applications and maintenance of the Centre's other centralized activities.

The task of processing admission applications for the 50,000+ additional secondary school applicants projected during the double cohort years, which will begin in 2002-2003, will also require much more office and warehouse space. After an extensive search, a site was selected in Research Park off Stone Road in Guelph. The new building, currently under construction, will provide 9,400 additional square feet; a 10-year lease is now being negotiated. OUAC has been at its Woodlawn Road location for almost 10 years and, during this time, has increased the square footage on two occasions. The Centre looks forward to continuing to offer its ever-expanding, award-winning services to Ontario universities and their applicants.

Appointments and moves

- Effective July 1, 2000, two new representatives have been appointed to the College-University Consortium Council (CUCC): Dr. Peter George, President, McMaster University, who will be replacing Dr. Ross Paul, President, University of Windsor; and Dr. Rowland Smith, Vice-President (Academic), Wilfrid Laurier University, who will be replacing Dr. Dennis Mock, Vice-President (Academic), Ryerson Polytechnic University.

- Effective July 1, 2000, Dr. Howard Alper, Vice-Rector (Research), University of Ottawa, will be the new Chair of Ontario Council on University Research, replacing Dr. William Bridger, Vice President (Research), University of Western Ontario, who will be completing his term.

- Effective July 1, 2000, Dr. Alan Weedon, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Western Ontario, will be the new Chair of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, replacing Dr. Paul Healy, Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, Trent University, who will be completing his term.

- Ian Marlatt from Ryerson Polytechnic University has been named the new Chair of the Ontario Universities Public Affairs Council (OUPAC), replacing David Estok from the University of Western Ontario who completed his term.

- Richard Smith has joined COU's Research, Analysis and Policy Branch as a Research Associate; and Paddy Buckley is assisting as a Research Analyst until the end of the summer.

- Marg Harrington and Sharon Cameron are Co-Directors of the Office of Health Sciences until Director Mary-Kay Whittaker returns from maternity leave.

COU publishes a newsletter for students and parents

In June 2000, COU will distribute its first issue of *The Knowledge Track*, a newsletter for university-bound students and their parents that will be published regularly between now and 2003-2004. The newsletter will highlight important educational developments in Ontario and track the progress that is being made, with an emphasis on secondary school reform and Ontario universities. All high school guidance offices and university admissions offices across Ontario will receive copies. If you would like a copy of *The Knowledge Track*, contact (416) 979-2165 ext. 236 or pub_aff@cou.on.ca, or visit the COU or OUAC web site (www.cou.on.ca or www.ouac.on.ca).

Council approves new Executive Committee

At its June 2nd meeting, Council approved membership of Executive Committee for 2000-2001:

- Dr. Paul Davenport, President, University of Western Ontario – Chair
- Dr. Mordechai Rozanski, President, University of Guelph – Vice-Chair
- Dr. Richard Van Loon, President, Carleton University
- Dr. David Marshall, President, Nipissing University
- Dr. Robert Birgeneau, President (effective July 1, 2000), University of Toronto
- Dr. William Leggett, Principal, Queen's University
- Dr. Lorna Marsden, President, York University
- Dr. Alan Harrison, Dean of Social Sciences, McMaster University (to October 2000)
- Dr. Bruce Muirhead, Department of History, Lakehead University (to October 2000)
- Dr. Ian Clark, President, COU – *ex officio*